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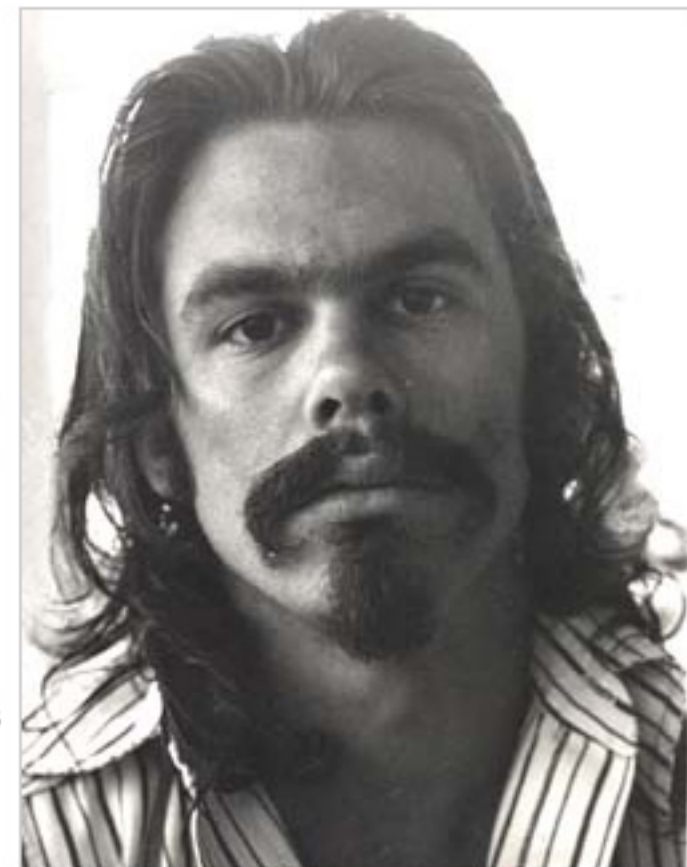
THE LOSS OF NAMELESS THINGS

by Eric Campos

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2004, Un-rated, 100 Minutes,

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It's a shame that it takes a near death experience to motivate some people to tap into their creative skills before it and they are gone. But that's how it goes. Sometimes we need a jolt to wake us up and get us moving, making us realize that our natural born gifts are not to be taken for granted. But for those not planning on having a near death experience any time in the near future (who does?), Bill Rose's "The Loss of Nameless Things" can also serve as that much needed jolt.

This documentary focuses on dangerously brilliant playwright Oakley Hall III who, through a near fatal fall from a bridge one late night, suffers brain damage and loses that special talent that had many revere the man as a true genius. The first half of the film, mostly composed of interviews with friends, family and colleagues of Oakley, depicts the man as a rising star, on his way to national recognition as a talented playwright and stage performer. We also learn of his moody behavior and his natural punk attitude. As these interviewees tell it, Oakley was the epitome of artistic genius.

Then comes the story of the fall of 1978 and no one is really sure whether this fateful plunge was a slip, jump or a push – perhaps this question will never be answered. In any case, the fall crushed half of Oakley's face and left him with severe brain damage. Through facial reconstruction, Oakley's looks were somewhat restored, although many referred to him as Quasimodo in comparison to his once rugged good looks, but it's what was going on inside that head of his that has been forever changed. Once a promising playwright, Oakley survived his spill only to have problems conveying thoughts and ideas verbally and the written word had become something almost impossible to construct. The old Oakley had vanished, replaced by this childlike character who seemed to barely know who he was or what was going on around him. He turned to drink and floated from job to job, ultimately finding his wife leaving him with their child. All seemed lost for the man until a new friend, who would eventually become his wife, took interest in Oakley and showed him the attention he needed in order to help him heal his damaged brain. Now, over 20 years after the tragic incident, Oakley seems to have his life together and appears to be a happier and gentler man than he ever was and he's survived to see one of his works, the play he was working on the night of his fall, go into production by a Northern California theatre company.

This engrossing story is so fantastic that it almost seems unreal, but that doesn't make it any less inspiring. Once again, it's proven that truth is stranger than fiction.

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